8. Skill up-gradatin/vocational training centre;

9. Power sub-station;

10. Communication post; and

11. Police establishments like police station/outpost/border outpost/ watch tower in sensitive areas (identified by Ministry of Home Affairs).

This general approval was valid upto 31.12.2006. The Government of India has recently promulgated 'The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recongnition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006', which provides, inter-alia, for diversion of forest land for many such activities, notwithstanding anything contained in the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

(e) and (f) During the last two years and the current year, i.e. from 1.01.2005 to 26.02.2007, 981 proposals for various developmental works, including 575 for roads, have been received in the Ministry of Environment and Forests from the State/Union Territory Governments for diversion of forest land under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Out of this, 702 proposals, including 424 for roads, have been approved.

Heating up of the earth

481. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the earth is heating up;

(b) if so, how Indian coastal area would be affected due to this;

(c) the rise in sea level expected and what shall be its adverse effects on agricultural production and population;

(d) how far the Gangotri and Pindari Himalayan Glaciers have receded during the last 10 years and its adverse on Himalayan rivers; and

(e) the efforts being made by Government for the protection of the population in all respects and when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Yes Sir. As per reports of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) global average air and ocean temperatures are increasing.

(b) and (c) Global warming, melting of ice sheets and corresponding sea level rise would adversely affect the low lying coastal areas. According to some initial studies the historic data of sea level reveals a high variability along the Indian coastline with an increase along the Gulf of Kutchh and West Bengal coastline and decrease along Karnataka coast. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group I Summary for Policy makers released recently indicate sea level rise under various scenarios ranging from 0.18 to 0.59 m by the end of the 21st century. The rising sea level may lead to increase in soil salinity, besides loss of land area. Though this is a very slow process, yet it is going to erode some of the agricultural land in deltaic and coastal areas close to sea, river and creeks. Rise in sea level may also push back fresh water/ saline water interface in ground water condition and resulting in increase in the salinity in ground water. The population living near the coast will also be affected consequent to these changes.

(d) The studies carried out by Department of Science & Technology on Gangotri Glacier revealed that the Glacier is receding at the rate of 17.15 m/year during 1971-2004 period. Another study estimated a retreat of 12.10 m during the year 2004-05. Geological Survey of India (GSI) has carried out studies on Pindari Glacier in 2001. As per the available data, Pindari Glacier has receded by 9.41 m/year during 1958-2001 period. This recession may cause marginal rise in discharge of Himalayan rivers due to enhanced melting.

(e) The recession of glaciers cannot be prevented on large scale in view of the nature of Indian Himalayan Glaciers (Debris covered), economic feasibility, scale of operation and likely pollution. As the prime responsibility of reducing emissions that enhance global warming lies with Developed countries, the Government of India is pressing in international negotiations that developed countries should take deeper emission reduction commitments and for a longer period.

Emission limit for asbestos fibre

482. SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to introduce emission limit for emission of asbestos fibre for all sorts of asbestos manufacturing units;